



## Short Safety Subject

Short Safety Subjects are provided by the Public Safety Business Center, Fort Bragg, NC. Our intent is to provide safety topics for the purpose of increasing safety awareness and improving safety performance. Additional Short Safety Subjects are available on the PSBC Business Management Web Site at:

[www.bragg.army.mil/psbc-bm/PubsAndForms/ShortSafetySubjects.htm](http://www.bragg.army.mil/psbc-bm/PubsAndForms/ShortSafetySubjects.htm)

### Winter Safety Briefing

During the winter, inclement weather and resulting unsafe road conditions add to the unusual hazards of driving. Normal safe driving habits should be modified to allow for these changing conditions. To insure safe winter driving, practice these safety tips:

- 1) **GET YOUR CAR READY FOR WINTER.** Either check it yourself, or if you are not familiar with automobiles, have it checked by a qualified mechanic.
- 2) **CHECK YOUR BATTERY.** Don't take for granted that your battery will see you through another winter. Battery power goes down during cold weather conditions. Get a charge if you need it, or maybe it's time for a new battery.
- 3) **CHECK YOUR BRAKES.** Good brakes are a MUST for winter safety. Have the equalization checked. A pull to one side can create a dangerous skid.
- 4) **PUT SNOW TIRES ON BEFORE THE SNOWFALLS.** Although studded snow tires do provide improved traction and braking on icy roads. They are not nearly as effective as reinforced tire chains for improving traction and braking on all winter road surfaces. Plus the fact that studs are illegal in many areas. Normally the best combination for winter driving is using snow tires and keeping a set of reinforced chains in the trunk for severe road conditions.
- 5) **CHECK YOUR WINDSHIELD AREA.** Wipers should have adequate arm tension, worn blades should be replaced. Use an antifreeze windshield solvent in the washer system: make sure your defrosters do the job. Always ensure your windshield is cleared prior to taking off to eliminate blind spots.
- 6) **HAVE YOUR MUFFLER AND EXHAUST SYSTEM CHECKED.** A faulty exhaust system could mean disaster, have the entire system checked for leaks. Carbon Monoxide Kills.
- 7) **KEEP WINDOWS CLEAR.** Front, rear and side windows should all be cleared, Remember danger comes from all directions! Brush all snow off before you start out. Don't be a peephole driver, this only works in submarines. Don't forget to clean the air intake in front of the windshield and from the wiper blades if they are frozen.

- 8) **ROAD SPLATTER SLUSH AND SALTED WET ROADS CAN GREATLY REDUCE VISIBILITY.** Use windshield washers and wipers frequently. When driving at night, stop occasionally to clean headlights and taillights. Headlight efficiency can be cut in half by road splatter.
- 9) **IT'S BEST NOT TO DRIVE IN FOG, SLEET OR HEAVY SNOW, BUT IF YOU MUST.** Keep your headlights on Low beam, high beams create more glare.
- 10) **DRIVE WITHIN OR BELOW THE LEGAL SPEED LIMITS.** Speed, fast acceleration, and abrupt steering movements are dangerous in the winter driving. Sudden lane changes or sharp turns can put you into a spin. Drive according to the conditions.
- 11) **YOU CAN'T STOP ON A DIME WHILE DRIVING IN SNOW AND ICE.** If you try it, you'll spin for sure. Slow down gradually, well ahead of intersections where the going is usually slippery ! Starting and stopping at crossing has a polishing effect on the ice and snow packed road.
- 12) **GIVE YOURSELF PLENTY OF TIME AND SPACE TO STOP, NEVER JAM ON THE BRAKES.** You'll only go into a skid. Pump the brakes with hard rapid jabs. That way the wheels will keep rolling and you will be less likely to lose steering control.

NOTE: Recent braking demonstrations on ice and loosely packed snow have shown that pumping disc brakes in a rapid succession is not an effective means of stopping your vehicle. Studies have shown that disc brakes grab faster and hold longer than drum brakes. It's recommended that the driver pump the brakes in slow successions making sure the brakes completely release between jabs.

### **Black Ice!**

When it's forecasted for temperatures near freezing, always expect BLACK ICE. Remember bridges and over passes freeze up before and remain frozen longer than other road surfaces. Also don't forget those shaded areas of road – they can and do hold treacherous ice patches. The following tips are especially relevant to county roads and need to be stressed:

- Be exceptionally wary during early morning and late evening when road icing is most likely to occur
- Icy sections are most likely to be found on and under bridges, on high sections of roads, at the tops of hills exposed to wind, in valleys and forest, and on roads near rivers, lakes and along foggy areas.
- When driving on a wet road, there is always a strong possibility that black ice may lie ahead
- Once on an icy section, do not accelerate, brake, gear down or make a sudden change in steering direction. Keep a safe distance from other vehicles.
- If you should get into trouble, try to steer to the edge of the road. Sand and salt from previous road "dustings" may have blown to the road edges by past traffic and will you help you regain control.
- Finally, the best advice for driving in Washington in the wintertime is the same as it is anywhere – Slow down and drive with care. Driving too fast allows you less time to react and reduces your chances of recovering from a mistake.

## **Slippin' and Slidin'**

Weather related hazards play a significant part in the increasing traffic mishap rates. Snow and Ice on roadways, combined with increased traffic, requires drivers to be even more vigilant than usual. Darkness falls much earlier during the winter months, which also increases the chances of traffic accidents. Piles of plowed snow and parking lots make deliveries more difficult. To add to the hassle, drivers may be physically below par in the winter due to frequent colds and flu, extra activities at home, and off-duty holiday celebrations.

Failure to keep your distance and provide yourself with a way out can add to the holiday problem. You may be driving safely, but what if someone ahead of you is speeding or distracted?

Winter driving conditions put more strain on vehicles no matter what traffic problems drivers may face: so it's important to make sure that your vehicle won't break down and complicate things. Be sure to check your headlights and taillights for alignment and brightness. Replace worn out windshield wipers and keep the fluid system filled—if you can't see a hazard, you can't avoid it. Make sure you have emergency tools and materials in the trunk for unexpected trouble. These include a flashlight, flares, battery cables, an empty gas can, blankets, work gloves, a bag of sand, and a shovel.

## **Winter Car Kit**

The following comprehensive equipment will help you keep WARM, VISIBLE, and ALIVE if caught by a winter storm:

- Blankets or Sleeping Bag – For each occupant of the vehicle
- Extra Warm Clothing – For each occupant. It's especially important have head cover, heavy gloves or mittens, and warm boots. A lot of body heat is lost through your extremities.
- High Calorie Non-Perishable Food – Candy, canned nuts, Raisins, etc. are a good source. In addition, if you can heat water and take along a cup, spoon, tea bags, hot chocolate, cup of soup, ETC. are excellent. Remember a can opener.
- Drinking Water – Make sure it is protected from freezing.
- Catalytic Heater – Make sure you know how to use the heater to prevent fire or dangerous fumes. Proper ventilation is essential.
- Matches, Candles, or Solid Fuels – Use cautions so you don't start a fire. Proper ventilation is necessary to prevent oxygen starvation. Let some fresh air into the vehicle. Do not go to sleep with a candle or solid fuel burning.
- Pocket knife and first aid kit – Make sure any special medicines that you or your family members require are included. Include a first aid manual with the kit.
- Facial or Toilet Tissue
- Transistor Radio – Include extra batteries
- Flashlight or signal light – Include extra batteries
- Battery Booster cables
- Signal Flares
- Shovel
- Two tow chains
- Sand or Cat litter – Can be used for traction if you get stuck.
- Basic Repair tools
- Axe – Can be used to cut tree branches to put under tires for traction.

## **ICE SKATING**

Whether skating or just sliding around on a lake or pond, the same dangers exist. Follow these guidelines:

- Always be wary of ice-covered lakes, ponds, rivers, etc. It may be strong in one place but not another. Cracked areas are especially dangerous.
- In judging the strength of ice, don't be deceived by thickness. Ice a foot thick may not hold child if it is snowy and sun rotted.
- Separated points. Thin spots should be marked.
- About three inches of good solid ice for small groups and four inches for large groups is considered a safe thickness.
- Keep skating surfaces clear of snow. Remember snow melts ice.
- If possible only skate on flooded fields or shallow ponds.
- Do not skate alone on unfamiliar ponds
- Do not skate at night unless the rink or pond is adequately lighted.
- Stop skating before you become overly fatigued.
- Do not skate fast or race others in crowded areas. Beginners should stay in area away from experienced skaters.
- Wear skates that fit properly and are sharp. When carrying skates, cover the blades with guards to protect yourself and others.

## **Hiking and Hunting Safety**

Hiking and hunting are both excellent sports to spend off duty time doing, but all too often people get caught out in woods unprepared for nature's worst.

- Always let someone know where you are going and when you will be back.
- Take a friend or partner whenever possible, the buddy system is the best way to enjoy nature.
- Have a basic survival kit
- Things to include are:
  - A Knife
  - Matches
  - Rope
  - Water Tablets
  - Compass
  - Mirror
  - Whistle
  - Flashlight
  - Emergency Blanket
  - High Calorie Foods
- ✓ Mark your trail whenever possible or make mental notes of your whereabouts in relation to a fixed object (i.e. a mountain, stream, power lines, etc.)
- ✓ Bring clothing for nature's changes; rain gear is always a sure bet.
- ✓ Remain calm if you get lost, panicking can put yourself in further danger. Stay put and collect your thoughts; try to remember your trail. If it gets dark, seek shelter and use your survival kit.

Hunting - Listed below are several safety tips to make hunting an enjoyable experience that you'll live to do again and again:

- Treat every Gun as if loaded
- Always maintain muzzle control of your firearms; keep the barrel pointed in a safe direction away from other people.
- Never carry a loaded firearm in a vehicle.
- Do not shoot your firearm in the direction of buildings or populated areas to include livestock.
- Always be sure of your target, do not shoot at noises in the brush, it could be your hunting buddy.
- Wear hunter orange out in the field, check your local state hunting regulations for the requirements.
- Dress for extreme weather conditions, it is usually raining or snowing during hunting season, so be prepared.
- Have a basic survival kit with you.
- If possible use the buddy system and hunt with a partner.